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New Haven
District 1199 New England
Before the Labor Committee

In Support of SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS

Good Evening Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Committee, my name is Marcial Torres and I'm a PCA from New Haven. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 1178.

Having healthcare is a very important benefit to me because I come from a family with genetics like chronic cancer in the family and diabetes. I spend \$1500 dollars annually on supplements as a preventive measure trying to avoid these predisposed medical conditions in my family.

Unfortunately, I work as a PCA which means I do not receive health insurance from the State of CT and currently have no coverage. In fact, I work 3 jobs at 100 hours a week trying to ensure my own economic viability for lack of a living wage and medical insurance on this state waiver program. I sprained my ankle last fall and now have thousands in bills that I can't pay.

Without paid time off, we're also left out in the cold when we or our consumers get sick. Without access to paid sick days, I am still living in fear of having to take time off to prioritize my health and well-being. One of my consumers got COVID and had to be hospitalized; I lost 90% of my income without any replacement wages. I had to rely on my credit cards just to stay afloat, and I'm still working extra hours to catch up.

Connecticut's negligence in failing to provide health care and sick time has left me with fear and debt from bills because I couldn't avoid going to the Emergency room. I deserve affordable health care and sick time. I should not have to live in fear of becoming sick because our state calls us heroes, but treats us like zeroes.

Fortunately we were able to win paid sick time in our contracts last year, but here we are a year later and the state has still not created a system where we can actually use this time. That's why Senate Bill 1178 is so important. Please support SB 1178 to ensure that home care workers are considered and covered under Connecticut's Paid Sick Day laws. Thank you for your time.